

COMMON QUESTIONS

REMINDERS FOR THE 2012 FLOAT SEASON

- The fee for Montana residents and non-residents is a \$10 non-refundable application fee that must accompany each application.
- Applicants must be a minimum of 12 years of age at the time of submitting the application. There is no age restriction to participate on a Smith River float trip.
- Successful applicants who receive a permit during the time period of May 15 through July 15 (peak season) will not be eligible to apply for a permit for this time period the following year. They may still apply for launch dates outside this time period, accompany other permitted trips, or acquire a cancelled permit for any launch date.
- In addition to the regular private float permits, FWP will issue one Super Permit each year. The recipient of the permit will be allowed to launch on any date of their choosing for that year. There is no limit to the number of chances someone may purchase (\$5 per chance). The money from the sale of Super Permit chances will be deposited into the Smith River Corridor Enhancement Account. The Super Permit drawing will occur after the regular private lottery, which means unsuccessful applicants will have an additional opportunity to draw a coveted Smith River permit!

Q. WHEN IS THE FLOAT SEASON? The float season varies widely depending on snowpack runoff, rainfall and amount and timing of irrigation. The "typical" float season runs from mid April through mid July with occasional floating in September and October. A permit and payment of fees is required to float year-round. ***Be prepared for any and all types of weather especially rain and snow early in the float season.***

Q. IS THERE A LIMIT ON THE NUMBER OF GROUPS PER DAY AND FLOATERS PER GROUP? Yes! A maximum of nine groups are allowed to launch per day. One launch per day is allocated to outfitted groups, except on Sundays and Wednesdays, when two outfitted groups are permitted. A maximum of 15 people are allowed per group.

Q. WHAT KIND OF BOATS CAN BE USED ON THE SMITH? Non-motorized watercraft only! Rafts are used by 75% of floaters and canoes used by about 10% of floaters. These are the most appropriate craft although drift boats, inflatable kayaks, and hard-sided kayaks are also taken down the river.

Q. HOW MANY DAYS DOES IT TAKE TO FLOAT THE SMITH? The float is 59 river miles from Camp Baker to Eden Bridge. A minimum of two nights and three full days should be planned for at normal water levels (350 +cfs). Most trips take four to five days. Factor in probable river flows, distances you wish to cover each day, and the type of experience you are seeking. Large drift boats and catarafts generally begin to have trouble at river flows below 350 CFS, rafts below 250 CFS and canoes below 150 CFS. These are estimated levels to assist floaters in trip planning and difficulty may be encountered at levels below those listed.

Q. IS THERE A LIMIT TO THE NUMBER OF NIGHTS ALLOWED ON THE RIVER? Yes! During the peak season of May 15 through July 15, floaters are limited to a maximum of 4 nights camping. Layover nights (2 or more nights at the same camp) are permitted at mid-canyon boat camps (Two Creek to Upper Parker) however, only one layover night is permitted during the peak season (May 15 – July 15).

Q. WHAT ABOUT DECLARING BOAT CAMPS? During the registration process, each group selects designated boat camps, based upon availability, for each night on the river. Registration and

boat camp selection is completed the morning of your scheduled launch based upon the order of sign-in (no more than 24 hours in advance) at Camp Baker. A sign-in sheet is located in a metal box on the porch of the Ranger Station.

Q. IS THEIR WHITEWATER ON THE SMITH? There is one section of class II whitewater at mile 47 and a tricky area at mile 49. However, the Smith always moves quickly with sharp turns, rocky shallows and snags partially across the river. You should have at least intermediate boating skills before floating the Smith.

Q. WHAT IS THE SMITH RIVER CORRIDOR ENHANCEMENT ACCOUNT (CEA)? The CEA was established to fund long-term protection strategies for the river corridor. 5% of all floater fees and \$50 from each outfitted client is placed in this account. In addition, all revenue generated from the sale of Super Permit Lottery chances are deposited into the CEA.

If you have any questions or would like any more information regarding the general permit or Super Permit drawings, please call Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (406) 454-5840 between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. MST, Monday through Friday.